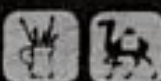


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CONTEST NO10

Visions



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**PLUS SEVEN COMPLETE STORIES
AND EIGHT OTHER FEATURES**

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

कुसुमस्तबकस्येव द्वे वृत्ती तु मनस्विनः ।
सर्वेषां मूर्ध्नि वा तिष्ठेद् विशीर्येत् वनेऽथवा ॥

*Kusumastabakasyeva dve vṛtti tu manasvinah
Sarveṣāṃ mūrdhni vā tiṣṭhed viśīryet vane'thavā*

A genius, like a bunch of flowers, goes either of the two ways: either he is placed at the head of all (adored by all) or he remains ignored and withers away (like flowers in the wilderness).

— The Hitopadeshah

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FAREWELL TO THE PRINCE AND THE WIZARD

The fairy tale is as old as human imagination. The fairy tale, as the dictionary informs us, does not necessarily mean a tale about the fairies. Any story depicting any kind of supernatural beings, often a folk-tale or a fantasy, can be called a fairy tale.

We do not question the situations depicted in a fairy tale from a realistic point of view. We enjoy them. The truth of a fairy tale does not lie in the physical plane, but in such planes from which we derive the inspiration to be brave, good and just.

Thousands of our readers have enjoyed reading *The Prince and the Wizard*. This was not only a fairy tale, but also a novel. With this issue we bid the brave prince and the sweet princess good-bye. Let them "live happily forever hereafter" as all fairy tale heroes and heroines are entitled to do!

But our readers will not be deprived of a fairy tale serial. From the next issue we begin yet another fairy tale fiction.





LET US KNOW

Will you please shed some light on telepathy?

Telepathy is the name given to the communication between two minds without the help of speech, sign or writing. Often the two persons may be stationed at a great distance from each other. Often the communication may be a one-way phenomenon. One person suddenly comes to know what another is thinking or doing.

This is a kind of extra-sensory perception, popularly known as ESP.

The term telepathy was introduced by Frederic Myers. Earlier the phenomenon was known by various other names such as "thought-transference", "mind reading" and "teleesthesia."

Telepathy has been a subject of great interest. There are numerous publications giving reports and studies of cases like the strange reading of a murderer's mind by someone leading to the detection of a crime.

Telepathy and other forms of ESP were highlighted in an international conference sponsored by the society of Psychical Research, London, and the Parapsychology Foundation, New York, at Cambridge, in 1956. Several organisations, in the West in particular, are trying to investigate in a scientific way the truth of telepathy. But it may be argued that telepathy occurs spontaneously; it may not occur under critical scientific scrutiny.

(Readers are requested not to send new questions for a few months. Let your magazine finish answering at least a part of the backload of questions.)

A LESSON AT A PRICE

A merchant was leading his caravan through a forest. While going along a narrow pass that went zigzag across a hill, one of his camels slipped and fell into a ditch. The merchant had neither the time nor the desire to attend to the unfortunate animal. He left it to die and went his way.

A pack of hungry jackals, while descending the hill, saw the delicious heap of food that was the camel. They danced around it for some time and getting even more hungry, went

closer to it to have their bites of the food.

"Hey, I've fixed my mind on that part of the camel from the very moment I saw it," a jackal warned the other who was near the camel's belly.

"How did you know that I had fixed my mind elsewhere?" retorted the other jackal. Soon it became clear that they would not be able to enjoy the food in peace, for each had his preference about the area of the camel's body that was to be his and also about the quantity.





"Let us appoint an arbitrator who would apportion each one his share. Nobody should question his decision," proposed the oldest jackal in the pack.

This sounded quite sensible. Someone suggested that let the oldest jackal do the work. But others did not approve of it. A jackal was a jackal, old or young. He was only one of the pack. The prestige of the pack would go up if they could convince a beast higher in rank to arbitrate.

So they went to a wolf who lived nearby. The wolf looked at them with a twinkle in his eyes and went near the camel.

"I am too hungry myself to take up the work you assign me!" he said with a yawn.

"Why not satisfy your hunger first? We can wait!" said the jackals out of courtesy. One of them even added, "You are our guest, after all!"

The wolf ate up the best part of the camel as the jackals looked on. He continued eating for two hours and then looked at the anxious pack and said, "I am too full to do the work you wish me to do now. Wait till the morrow." And he crouched beside the camel.

The jackals looked at each other and retreated. With great eagerness and greater hunger, they collected there in the next morning.

The wolf got up and said, "Wait!" The jackals were hopeful of getting their share now. But the wolf quietly resumed eating the camel and continued doing so as if he was performing a sacred duty!

The jackals waited for a full hour. Then one of them took a step forward and stuttered out, "Sir Wolf, er-er, have you forgotten us by any chance?"

"No!" said the wolf with a sneer and concentrated on the camel again.

Yet another hour passed. Two jackals stepped forward and, murmured, "Sir Wolf! It is we who..."

The wolf looked at them in such a way that the two leaders of the pack slunk back immediately. Thereafter there was no exchange between the wolf and the jackals.

"It was stupid of us to invite him" observed the oldest jackal. "We should have depended on our own judgement. It should not have been difficult had we been a bit less selfish."

Nobody dared to comment on the observation. After a moment one of them asked, "But must we look on while the wolf continues in his treachery?"

"Either we bear the humiliation, or, if act we must, we should appeal to a nobler creature," said the oldest jackal. After a little discussion, they went and met a lion and narrated their woe to him.

The lion reached there in a few bounds and gave out a roar. The wolf sprang up and left the camel and ran.

But he had not gone far when the lion pounced upon him and tore him to pieces. Without a word, he went back to his cave, leaving the half-eaten camel to the grateful jackals. They did not quarrel any more, for they had learnt a lesson at the cost of half of their food.



The Prince and the WIZARD

(The wizard whisks away the princess and Badal's magic castle and soon thereafter whisks away Badal himself. Wandering in the forest in search of Badal, Ramu chances upon the traveller who knows about a pair of magic sandals and a shawl lying in a cave. The sandals could take one anywhere one wished to go and the shawl could make one invisible. Ramu outwits the goblins guarding the property and takes possession of the sandals and the shawl. By their virtue, he reaches the wizard's region.)

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Invisible to others, Ramu stood near Badal and surveyed the situation.

While Badal lay on the ground with his hands and feet bound and mouth gagged, near him sat Mangal, the wizard's assistant, tormenting the captive hero with peals of gleeful laughter.

Mangal looked weird with his long hair running over his face, instead of falling backward.

"Whatever be the reason for this fellow to sport such a strange hair-style, it will facilitate my work. My hair is no shorter; I should be able to assume his appearance easily," thought Ramu.

Next moment he fell on Mangal with great fury. The first thing he did was to gag him. The fellow looked up and

down goggling his eyes, but saw none, as Ramu still remained invisible. The surprise which Mangal's eyes recorded made even Ramu smile.

However, Mangal proved stronger than expected. He struggled a great deal while Ramu, with a thick string of rope, reduced him to a parcel.

Throwing Mangal in a corner of the room, Ramu hurried to Badal and knelt down near him. While the first thing he had done to Mangal was to gag him, the first thing he did with Badal was to remove his gag.

Badal slowly opened his eyes. Ramu, who had removed the shawl and was visible, warned him not to speak. With his sharp knife, he then promptly cut asunder the chords with which Badal was bound.

Free, Badal embraced Ramu.

Ramu whispered to Badal in a nutshell all that had happened.

"Ramu, first go and see what the wizard is doing. Then we can decide upon our course of action," Badal advised Ramu.

Ramu went away, but covering himself with the shawl, and returned in a short time. He was looking jolly.

"Badal, it is not enough to recover the magic bell. The wizard is powerful even without it. We must divest him of all his power of wizardry," said Ramu.

"We should. But how to do

that?" asked Badal.

"I have discovered the secret of his strength. I had heard from our late Master that the power for a kind of black magic remains vested in one's hair, either on the head or in the beard. I just peeped in and saw the wizard performing certain rites with his beard. I am sure, his beard is the source of his power," confided Ramu.

Both discussed for a short while and then hit upon a plan.

While Badal stood guard, Ramu stripped Mangal of his clothes and put them on himself.





The door of the room in which the princess was detained remained locked. But it was not difficult for Badal and Ramu to enter it through the window.

As soon as Princess Pratiba's eyes fell on Ramu, whom she took to be Mangal, she frowned and looked in another direction.

"Princess!" called out Badal.

The voice had its inevitable effect. The princess turned as swiftly as a string of lightning.

"Prince!"

That was all she could utter.

Badal took her hands into his and said, "God's kindness has come to us through my friend, Ramu, whom you mistake to be

the wizard's assistant. Now, we must act promptly. For a while you have to remain invisible and I must take your place."

"O Prince, your words sound like riddles to me," said the excited princess. In brief Badal explained their plan to the excited princess. Covered with the magic shawl, the princess became invisible.

Ramu went out and met the wizard who was coming out of Patal Bairavi's sanctuary.

"O Guru, there is excellent news for you," he whispered.

"What is it, my dear boy?" asked the wizard.

"I had a talk with the princess through the window. At length I narrated your numerous virtues to her. She has come to senses. Convinced that you are the most eligible bridegroom for her, she has agreed to marry you, provided. . . ."

"Provided. . . .?" the wizard asked, all agog with joy.

"Provided you shed your beard. She is mortally afraid of beards," replied the disguised Ramu.

"But, Mangal, you know how important to me is the beard. . . ."

"I know, Guru, but I am convinced that you have to

choose between the bride and the beard," said Ramu.

The wizard stood pensive.

"Guru, once you are married, you can grow a jolly beard again. Now is the golden chance for you to prove that you love her more than your beard," said Ramu again.

"Mangal! I think I should accept your suggestion," announced the wizard after a moment.

An hour later, a jubilant, smooth-shaven wizard coughed meaningfully as he entered his captive's room. He saw the princess lying on her bed,

covered with a silken sheet.

The wizard hemmed and hawed and said, "Look here, lovely princess! I have shed my beard for your sake. You won't understand what the sacrifice means to me! But what is there that I can't give up for the sake of winning your love?"

There was no response from the princess except for a slight movement. But even that much was quite encouraging to the wizard.

"I must confess that all I intended to own is the kingdom. But, after I saw you, I felt that you were a far greater prize





than the kingdom itself. . . .”
The wizard laughed affably.

Since there was no response from the princess even then, the wizard advanced and sat down on the edge of her bed. He was thinking if he should make bold to touch her when, crying aloud, Mangal rushed in. He had managed to free himself.

“Where are you, O Guru?” shouted Mangal, bereft of his upper garment.

“What is the matter, Mangal?” asked the wizard in surprise.

“O Guru, who asked you to shave off your beard? No

doubt, the very ghost who left me bound! You are deceived, I am afraid!” cried out Mangal.

“What?” howled out the wizard.

“Your prisoners might have already escaped!” shouted Mangal.

The wizard, shaking with fury, snatched the cover off Badal’s body. Badal sprang up to his feet and instantly the two were locked in a wrestle.

Mangal tried to help his guru, but was kicked off by Badal. He fell yards away.

The magic bell which the wizard always carried with him, slipped down. Mangal tried to recover it, but Ramu who rushed in threw him on the ground before he could lay his hand on it.

The wizard was about to pick up the bell when Badal tossed it to a corner. Next, Mangal managed to be near it. But Ramu rolled on the ground and pushed it far.

The race for the bell continued for quite some time. Suddenly the bell seemed to rise high of its own accord. The wizard’s eyes grew round. Needless to say, the bell had been picked up by the invisible princess.

The princess rang the bell and, as soon as Bairavi's emanation appeared, she asked her to carry the castle back to the city.

At once the castle rose to the sky. Locked in the fight, neither the wizard nor his assistant took note of it. Badal and Ramu gradually drove their adversaries to the brink of the castle. Badal gave the wizard a strong last push. So did Ramu to Mangal. The castle was then flying high over a range of snow-clad hills. The wizard and his disciple tumbled down and began falling head-

long through the layers of cloud. Their piercing cries faded in the coolness of the sky.

But no sooner had the cries been silenced than there was heard a terrific sound from below. Badal looked down and saw a hundred rocks flying high. It was like a sudden eruption of a volcano, followed by an earthquake smashing a region.

"I think, along with the wizard's plunge to death his secret citadel of black magic is destroyed," commented Badal. The princess and Ramu looked on with awe and astonishment. But





the castle was fast moving away. The region became hidden behind clouds.

When the castle was about to descend on the hillock where it originally stood, not far from King Bhuvansingh's palace, Badal, Princess Pratiba, and Ramu were already on the balcony, enjoying the breeze and the tender sunlight of the morning. Thousands rushed forward to greet them. At the head of the crowd were the

king and the queen.

The course of the marriage that had been interrupted resumed. Untold was the joy of the people. Among the guests of honour was the traveller who had informed Ramu about the existence of the magic sandals and the shawl.

At the end of the nuptial ceremony King Bhuvansingh announced his decision to retire to a hermitage along with his queen. Badal was to become the new king. Samser who had been freed from gaol on the occasion of Badal's triumphant return, also announced his desire to renounce the world. But as Badal promised to find a suitable bride for him, he blushed and agreed to stay on.

Badal announced that Ramu was to be his prime minister and the helpful traveller his adviser. Badal also gathered his comrades, the descendants of the nobility that surrounded King Veersingh, his grandfather. In course of time Badal won fame as a great king and Pratiba as a generous queen.

THE END

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ADVENTURES OF MINTOO **BARGAIN WITH A BEAR**

Mintoo and Meena were playing hide and seek. Mintoo hid atop a bushy tree, but Meena could trace him all right.



Now it was Meena's turn to hide. She entered a dense bush and, sitting down, crawled backward till she fell into a large she-bear's lap.



The she-bear was relaxing after a meal of ants from the ant hill. Fascinated by Meena, she took hold of her and ran away.



Meena's scream put Mintoo on the bear's track. The bear climbed a rock and sat gleefully. When Mintoo threatened her with his sling, she used Meena like a shield.





Behind the rock, in a cavern, the she-bear had her three little cubs. Jhandoo knew the secret.

Jhandoo made a dive into the cavern and picked up a cub and made good his escape.



Jhandoo was seen on a tree-top exactly opposite the rock, attracting the she-bear's attention with his gibber, and showing her the cub.



The bear was least prepared for such a situation. She gave out a growl and left Meena on the ground. At once Jhandoo restored her cub to her.



A Tale from Malaysia

MYSTERY OF THE SALT IN THE SEA

Upon the stretch of land between the sea and the village stood a hut. A poor man and his wife lived in it.

They had a rich neighbour who lived in a nice house and had many things to eat. Whenever he needed, he called the poor man and asked him to do this work or that, but never paid him anything.

It was a Christmas evening. "We ought to eat well tonight," said the poor man's wife. "But

we don't have a morsel in the house. Why not ask our rich neighbour to give us some food-stuff?"

"Why not!" said the poor man in agreement and he went forth to meet the rich man.

"God will bless you if you give us some food-stuff today," said the poor man.

The rich man felt proud that someone begged of him. He was, however, not willing to part with even a loaf of bread.





But there was a basketful of rotten meat in his house and he wanted someone to take it away and dump it somewhere far so that he was not bothered with the foul smell.

"I'd consider giving you what you want only if you carry this basket away," he said.

"Carry it away where?"

"To hell," said the rich man with a chuckle. Then, inspired by his own sense of humour, he said again, "But mind you, you must carry it right up to hell. Short of that you get nothing!"

The poor man lifted up the basket and went out.

It was getting dark and a cold breeze was blowing. The poor man walked on and on by the desolate seashore. "I wonder how far is hell and if I can come back well on time to have a Christmas dinner with my wife!" he mumbled.

"I'll show you the way to hell if you give me a few pieces from the basket," said a voice. The poor man looked to his left and looked to his right and then, looking back, saw a strange figure, as thin and as fearful as a scarecrow, following him.

"There is a great demand for rotten meat in hell tonight. If you are clever, you won't part with your basket until you have got a good price for it," whispered the fellow.

"What do you think would be the price?" asked the poor man.

"There is a grinding stone behind the door. Ask that for the price of the meat," advised the fellow.

The poor man hauled out a portion of the rotten meat for the fellow who removed a slab of stone from under a bush and asked the poor man to go down the dark passage.

"When you come up, I'll show you how to handle the

grinding stone," said the fellow.

The poor man dropped into a weird region. At once a hundred monstrous beings thronged around him and requested him for the rotten meat.

"I can part with the whole basket for that grinding stone lying behind the door," said the poor man.

Now, there are many things in hell lying scattered of which the residents of that region remember nothing. They had no hesitation in giving away the grinding stone.

The poor man put down the basket amidst the monstrous crowd which scrambled for its contents and came out with the

grinding stone.

Out on the familiar road, he saw the fellow waiting for him.

"I brought the grinding stone, obeying your instruction. But, to be frank, I have hardly any use for it, for, I have nothing to grind!" lamented the poor man.

"You can grind your wish, can't you?" asked the fellow. He then told the poor man the secret of the magic stone. You wish something and give a turn to it. The thing will come out of it. He also told him how to stop it when it has whipped up enough of the thing you need.

The poor man returned home





happy, though tired.

"Where were you so long? And what you are carrying is no food, I bet, but a useless stone!" observed his wife.

The poor man smiled and set the grinding stone at the centre of the kitchen and wished into it a variety of items to make the most excellent Christmas dinner. The grinding stone whipped up everything, one after another.

His wife remained gaping at it for a long time. Then she laughed and danced for a longer time.

Next day they asked the grinding stone for gold enough to construct a good house.

When the house was constructed, they asked it for various things with which to decorate the house.

They went on asking the grinding stone for sumptuous food not only for themselves, but also for their neighbours. Often they threw feasts for them.

The rich neighbour got surprised and curious. A man who was so poor that he had nothing to eat on the Christmas day was now doing like a king! This was puzzling, maddening!

By and by he found out the secret. He then tried his best to persuade the neighbour to sell the grinding stone to him. When he did not succeed, he tried to steal it away.

The poor man who was no longer poor, saw that his life was in danger on account of the grinding stone. He at last agreed to sell it to his neighbour but only after he had obtained from it enough wealth to last for five generations. And he extracted for it the highest possible price from his rich neighbour.

The rich neighbour was then setting sail for trade. Instead of taking any merchandise with him, he took only the grinding stone. "I will get all I want

from it," he thought.

On the very first night after he set sail, he and his crew realised that they had forgotten to bring any salt with them for their dinner.

"Set the dinner. I will presently produce salt," the master ordered his men and then he wished the grinding stone to whip up salt.

It began to work. Salt started pouring out of it. Salt, salt and still more salt. The master was very happy at first to see the magic. But soon he knew that he had already got more than he would ever need. "Stop!" he shouted. But the grinding stone still went on producing salt. His cabin was full of the thing. The load on the small ship was growing heavier. He handled the grinding stone in this way and that

way but to no avail. It went on giving salt.

"What a pity that I forgot to ask my neighbour how to stop it work!" he shouted, scratching his head. And these were almost his last words. He was buried under salt which soon overflowed into the other parts of the ship.

The panicky crew tried their best to relieve the load on the ship by hauling out into the sea as much salt as they could. But soon they got exhausted. Full to the brim with salt, the ship went down, down to the bottom of the sea.

But the grinding stone is still at work under the sea. That is why the water of the sea never stops being salty. Every monsoon pours new water on the sea. But that too grows salty in no time.



Jack and the Beanstalk

It was a desolate foggy afternoon. Along the lonely road walked Jack, dragging his cow. He was on his way to the market.

"Hello, will you sell me your cow for these wonderful beans?" asked a stranger.

"Wonderful, are they? Well, why not!" Jack received the beans in exchange for the cow and returned to his lonely hut where his mother waited for him.

The mother was in a fury at seeing the beans. She hurled them away and Jack had to go to bed without food.

Early in the morning what should Jack see but a tall beanstalk, grown out of the beans

his mother had thrown away, reaching the sky! Jack lost no time in climbing it. It was fun though tiring, and soon he was above the clouds. There floated a strange land with a solitary castle at the centre.

The lady of the castle was kind to Jack. But it is uncertain how her husband, a giant, would have behaved had he seen him. Jack sat hiding in the oven till the giant dozed off while counting his gold coins. Jack stole a bag of them and climbed down to his hut.

The mother and son lived happily on the gold coins. But Jack was ambitious. He paid one more trip to the castle on the cloud and this time stole



STORIES FROM CHILDREN'S CLASSICS

a magic hen that laid gold eggs.

He paid even a third visit and stole a wonder harp that played all by itself at a command. But this time the giant woke up and chased him. Jack climbed down as fast as breeze and cut the beanstalk at the root. The giant who was midway down the beanstalk, fell like a huge rock and fell to his death!

Jack grew famous and married a beautiful princess.

This old - and never old - story, popular all over the world, remains a mystery so far as its origin is concerned. It is to be found among the North American Indians as well as the natives of South Africa.

A CONTROVERSIAL CHOICE

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. From time to time lightning dazzled the region and revealed weird faces. The howling of jackals mingled with the sound of some eerie laughter.

Rain had extinguished the fires in the pyres; no human being was to be traced in the vast cremation ground. Cool gusts whistled in the trees.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the tree again and brought the corpse down.

Then, with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, he began crossing the desolate cremation ground. Suddenly spoke out the vampire that possessed the corpse: "O King, surely, you have sought the advice of some of your wise ministers before undertaking this difficult mission. But know this: at times the counsel of even the wisest minister might



prove useless. Let me tell you the episode that concerned the king of Shantipur. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: The king of Shantipur had only one child, a daughter. Manjari was her name. It was unfortunate that she was an extremely short-tempered girl. The indulgent parents hardly tried to tame her. As years passed, she became notorious for her arrogance and quarrelsomeness. She was never tired of screaming and hurling abuses at her maids and even playmates. On the slightest pretext, she even beat up people. All were scared of her.

She reached the age when her parents must find out a suitable bridegroom for her. The young man to marry her would also succeed the king to the throne. The king was sure that many a young man of the nobility would come forward as candidates. The throne was a great temptation, after all.

But days passed; no proposal for marriage with the princess was forthcoming. The minister even sounded some of the eligible youths of the land with the proposal. But they backed out, showing some plea or the other.



Everyone had heard the shrill voice of the princess echoing in the high walls of the palace!

The king had no peace of mind. The future of the princess and the kingdom worried him to death.

Vijay was a prince from a neighbouring kingdom. Once a year he became the guest of the king of Shantipur, for, the jungles of Shantipur were a great attraction for hunters.

When Vijay became his guest next, the king told him, in course of a private audience with him, "I don't know what to do about my daughter's marriage. She is rather arro-

gant and rude. One who marries her might lose all his peace!"

"Ha! Ha!!" laughed Vijay. "I am willing to take up the challenge. I shall show how to humble her. I am yet to see somebody who has been rude to me and has not been cut to size! If you so wish, arrange her marriage with me," said Vijay.

The king thanked him and promised to give a thought to it. Vijay, after a week's stay there, left for home.

Next to visit Shantipur was Jay, also a prince, from another kingdom. He too enjoyed the king's hospitality when he came

for hunting once a year.

The king spoke about his worry to Jay too. He heard everything with patience and said, "My lord, if you so desire, I can marry the princess. Arrogance is a weakness in one's nature. One generally hides some defect with a show of temper. I am willing to study the princess with patience and try to change her."

The king thanked him and promised to give a thought to his offer. Jay left after a few days.

The king then reported in detail to his minister his conversations with the two princes, and asked, "What is your



advice? Whom should we choose?"

"My lord, my sincere advice is, do not seek my advice in this matter. Let your daughter's destiny be decided by yourself," replied the minister.

"No, my minister, the problem concerns the destiny of the kingdom too. You have to give your advice in the matter," said the king.

"My lord, I am afraid, even if I do my duty with all honesty, I may be later blamed for something or the other so far as this issue is concerned," said the minister.

"You do your duty honestly. That is all I expect of you," said the king.

"Very well, my lord, if that is your order, my advice is, let Jay marry the princess," said the minister.

The marriage was performed. Jay came over to Shantipur and was declared the Crown Prince.

A year passed and then two years. The princess continued to be as rude as ever. The prince began spending more and more time outside his apartment, attending to the business of the State. He had tried his best to put sense into the princess during the first year.



During the second year, he was observed giving up his effort.

This development did not escape the king's notice.

The unhappy king one day told his minister, "You gave me a wrong advice!"

The minister, looking grave, said, "My lord, recollect the exact dialogues we had on the issue. If you do so, you will not blame me."

The king closed his eyes and, after a while, nodded. He had appreciated the minister's stand.

The vampire paused for a moment and asked in a challenging tone, "How could the minister claim to be right although his

advice proved to be wrong? Why did the prince fail to correct the fault in his wife's nature even though he knew the cause of one's anger and arrogance? O King, answer me if you can. If you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answers, your head would roll off your shoulder!"

Answered King Vikram at once: "The minister had at first made it quite clear that the king ought not to seek his advice on the issue. It is when the king raised the question of the kingdom and insisted on his advice that the minister spoke. Well, an ideal minister must put the interest of the kingdom above that of an individual. He had realised that Vijay who was ruthless by nature, would control the princess very well, but with the same ruthlessness

he would smother all opposition and criticism against him. In other words he would prove a tyrant.

"On the other hand the minister had realised that Jay who was kind and conscientious would make a good king and be a blessing for the people. The minister cared not about the personal life of Jay or the princess.

"Jay's knowledge of the cause of arrogance and anger was correct. But he could not change the princess because the princess herself had no desire to change! With all your good will and wisdom you cannot change a human being unless he or she had a mind to change!"

As soon as the king concluded his answer the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



The Builders of India's Heritage

MIRZA GHALIB

"Sentence of life-imprisonment was passed on me. Fetters were put on my feet. Delhi was fixed as my prison.....when it was found out that I was a prisoner likely to escape, I was put under handcuffs."

Any reader would take this passage to be a part of a prisoner's memoirs. But this is how India's great poet Ghalib looked upon his life. He thought that he really did not belong to this world of "earth and water". His true home was the "world of spirit." It is to suffer some

punishment that he was upon the earth. If Delhi was like a prison to him, his marriage had proved to be his fetters. The handcuffs of which he speaks were the burden of two orphans he had to carry.

Ghalib, whose family name was Mirza Asadullah Beg, was born in 1797 at Agra. His ancestors were soldiers of rank and were counted among the nobility. Ghalib, however, had to face the hardships of life quite early, for, he lost his father at five and his uncle, who was his





guardian, a few years later.

But the course of his life changed with his marriage with the daughter of Mirza Ilahi Baksh, a distinguished poet commanding respect in the moghul court. He came over to Delhi where his literary talent flourished rapidly.

The language, Urdu, was one of the happy outcomes of the mingling of Turki and Persian on one hand and Hindi on the other. The first great Urdu poet was Wali (1668-1744) who lived in Hyderabad (of modern Andhra Pradesh) and later in Delhi.

The Gazal is a form of Urdu poetry which enjoyed wide

popularity. Ghalib found this form an excellent medium for giving expression to his inspiration. In fact, Gazal became immensely rich and subtle in his hands.

But poetry did not bring him prosperity. The East India Company gave him a pension on account of his ancestral *jagir* which the Company had taken over. That being quite insufficient, Ghalib sought a respectable job.

His well-wishers tried to get him a teacher's position in the newly founded Delhi College. It was almost done. All he had to do was meet the Chief Secretary of the Company's Government, Thompson.

Ghalib went to the Chief Secretary's house, carried in a palanquin. He entered the compound. One of the assistants of Thompson asked him to come in. But Ghalib wouldn't. He remembered that the same Chief Secretary had received him and other guests at the entrance of the Governor's residence when he went there on an invitation. Why should he not come out to receive him at the entrance of his own residence?

The assistant explained to him that at the Governor's

house he was a guest; here he was a candidate for a post! But Ghálib was not convinced. He was the same Ghalib—guest or candidate. If yesterday his prestige merited a certain courtesy from Thompson, it ought to merit the same courtesy today. If it did not, that only meant that by accepting the post Ghalib was lowering his own prestige.

He went back!

However queer such conduct of Ghalib might seem, it reveals the type of man that he was. He was certainly different.

An ardent believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, he unfolded in his poetry vistas which were profoundly human. He had a strong faith in the future. He

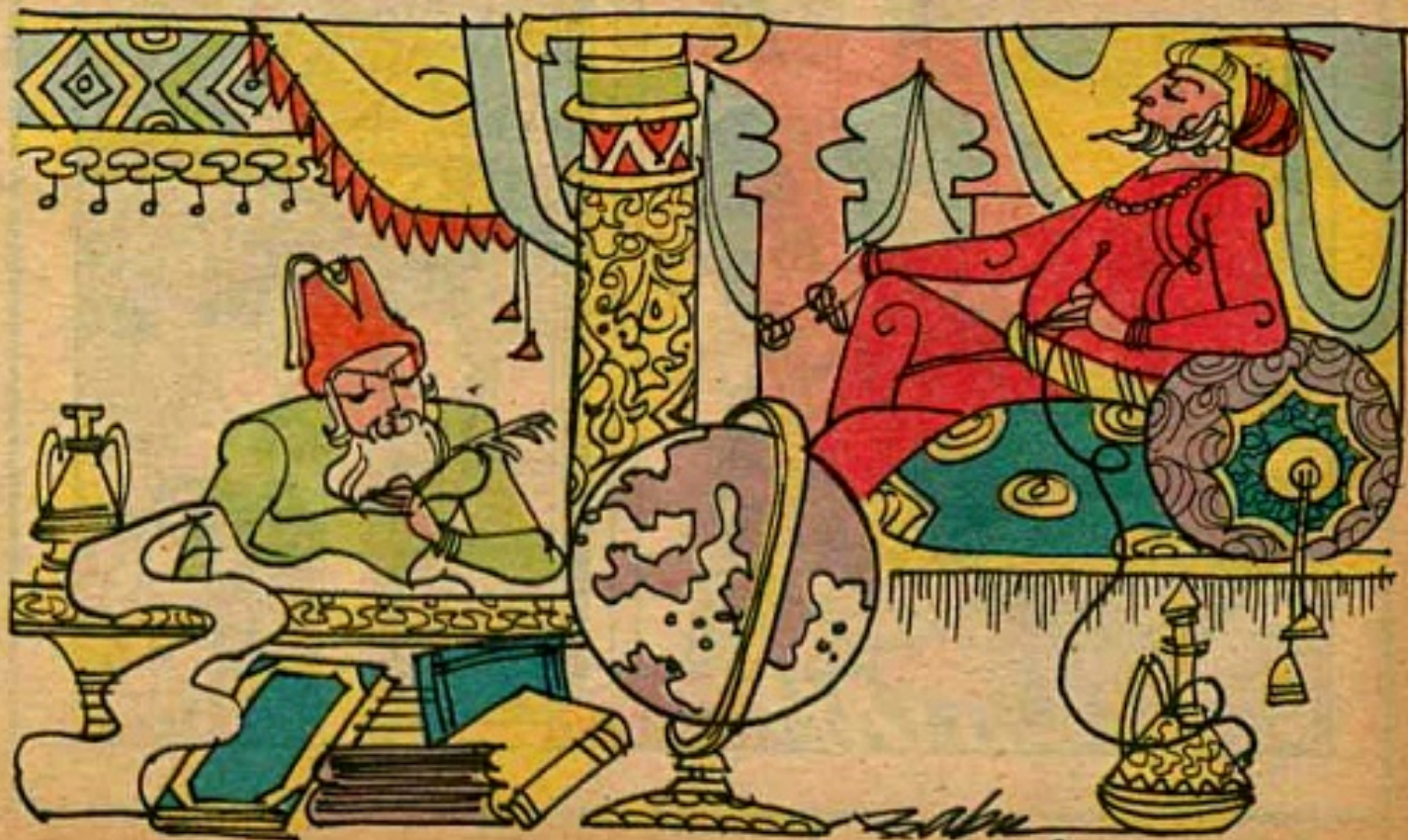
wrote:

Joyful dreams of future
my songs nourish;
I am the nightingale in the
garden
that's yet to flourish.

(Free rendering)

Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Moghul Emperor, appointed Ghalib his court historian. After the great Sepoy Revolt of 1857 was suppressed and Bahadur Shah was deported to Burma, all who were associated with him came under the wrath and suspicion of the British. Among them was Ghalib. He passed his last days in poverty and sickness and died in 1869.

The most famous of his collections of poems is *Diwan-e-Ghalib*.



THE BLACK MARK

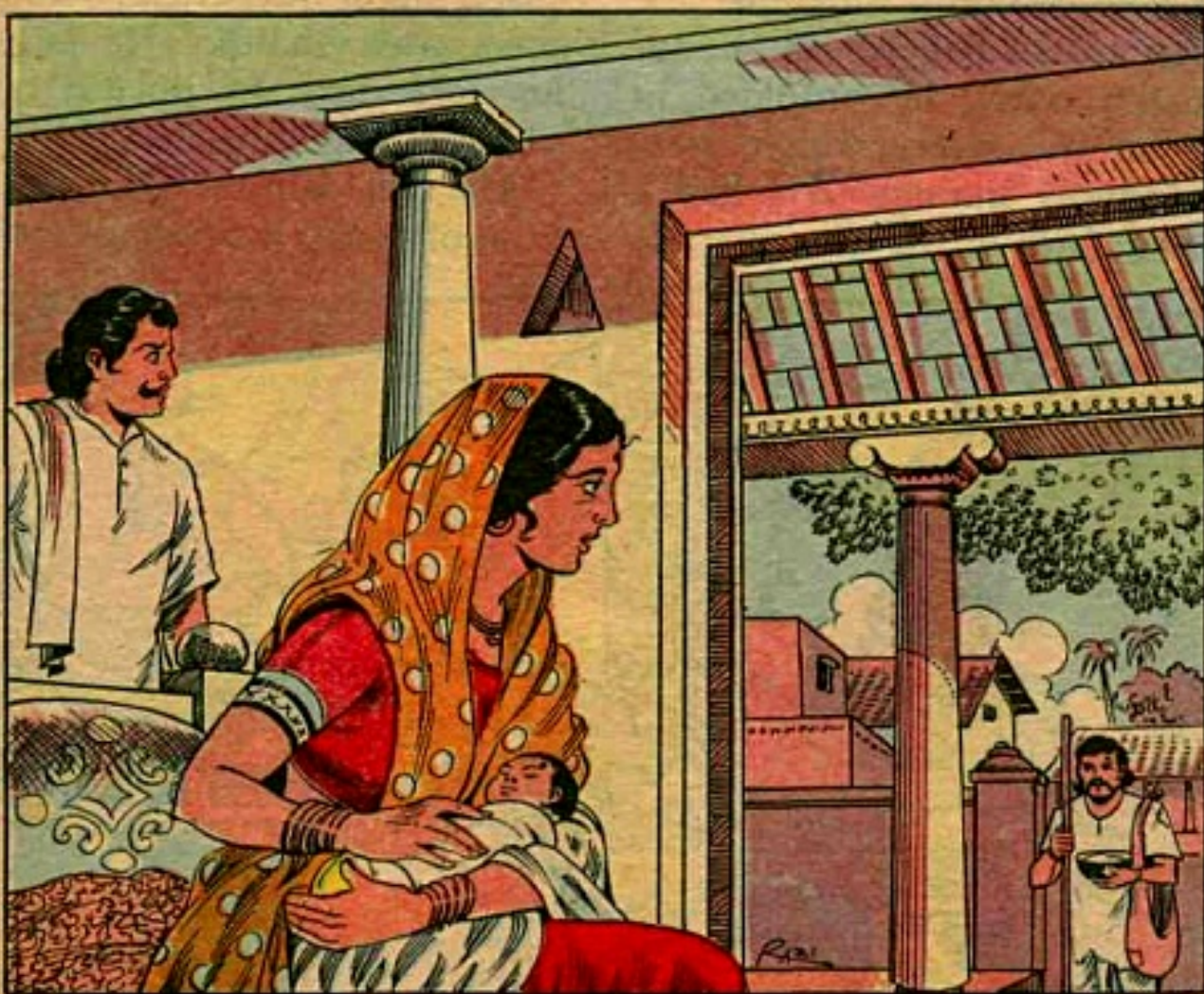
A son was born to a couple. There was a black mark on the left side of the child's forehead.

"This mark indicates that our son would become a king. So says my granny," said the proud mother.

"But I had heard from our family astrologer that such marks indicate a scholarly career!" observed the no less proud father.

Both were locked in a vehement argument, the wife claiming her granny to be wiser than the astrologer and the husband claiming the astrologer to be wiser.

Just then an illiterate beggar approached them for alms. As the couple looked at him, they saw a black mark on his forehead. They fell silent.



THE EXAMPLE OF COMPASSION

Deep in the forest lived the great sage Vasistha. One day a king, Viswamitra, became his guest. The sage received the king with warmth and affection.

Vasistha and his wife, Arundhati, entertained the king and his party to a sumptuous dinner. In quality and taste, the food was far superior to what the king ate in his own palace. This surprised the king.

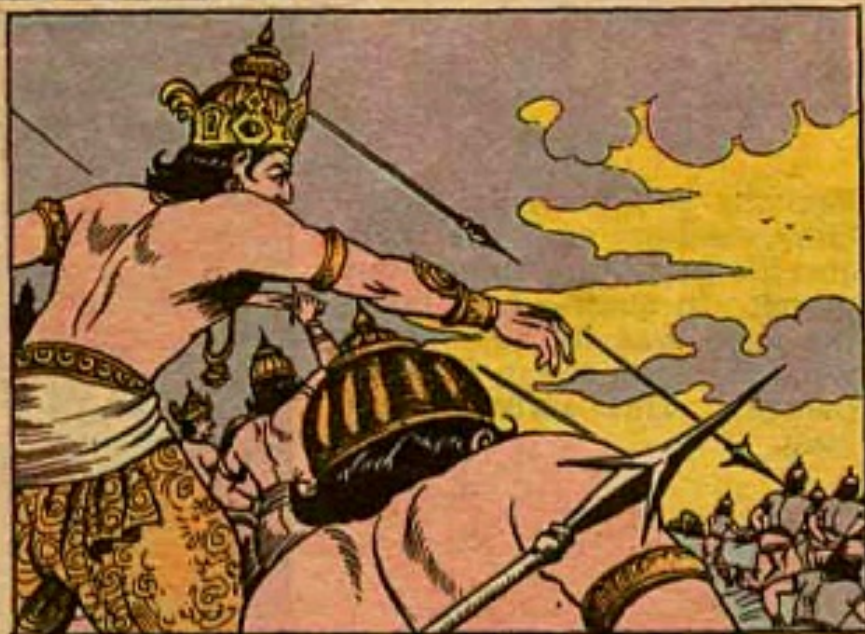


The sage had nothing to hide. He showed to his guest a wonderful cow, Nandini. The cow was capable of giving whatever the sage asked of her. It is she who had given the delicious food-stuff.



The king, fascinated by the wish-fulfilling cow, begged it of the sage. But as Vasistha was not in a position to oblige him, the king ordered his soldiers to take hold of Nandini.

Since the sage had no soldiers to protect his property, he prayed to Nandini to protect herself. Instantly a thousand supernatural beings emerged and killed or drove away the king's party.



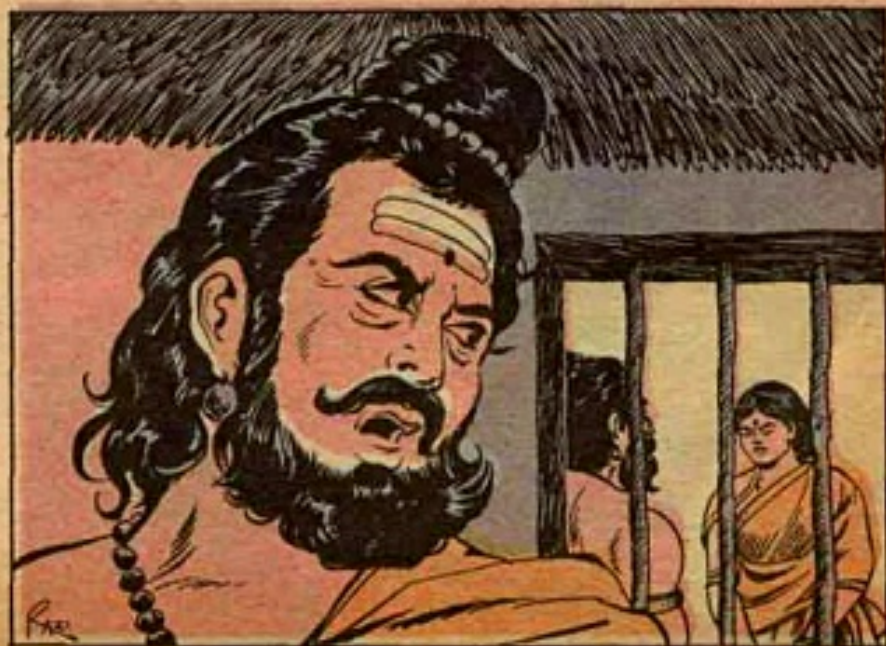
Awfully humiliated, King Viswamitra realised that far superior to the kingly power was the spiritual power. He renounced his throne and retired into a forest and began a severe penance and became a sage.

Emerging as a sage, Viswamitra confronted Vasistha. Vasistha had no hesitation in addressing him as *Rajarshi*, a sage among the kings. But Viswamitra demanded the honour of *Brahmarshi*—the highest status among the sages.



As Vasistha did not concede his demand, Viswamitra was terribly annoyed. Through a demon, he got all the sons of Vasistha killed. It was a great shock for Vasistha and his wife. But Vasistha took no revenge.

Days passed. One day Vasistha asked Arundhati to borrow a little salt from Viswamitra's hut. "How do you ask me to go to our enemy?" she asked. "I've no enemy. I love Viswamitra. I did not call him *Brahmarshi* so that he can try and really become that," said Vasistha.





This was a revelation for Viswamitra who overheard this. He fell at Vasistha's feet and apologised and said "Give me true knowledge." "Go to Anantadeva who holds the earth on his head. He will teach you," said Vasistha. Viswamitra proceeded forthwith.

"Hold the earth for a moment and I'd tell you," said Anantadeva. Viswamitra applied all his spiritual power, but failed to do it. "Havn't you earned any credit by being in contact with any great soul?" asked Anantadeva. Viswamitra remembered his contact with Vasistha. He could now hold the earth.



Back at Vasistha's Ashram, Viswamitra asked, "Vasistha, you are so great yourself. The credit I earned by merely coming in your contact enabled me to hold the earth. Why did you send me elsewhere?" "It is to cultivate in you this much faith in me," replied Vasistha, with calm and equanimity.

A SPURT OF AILMENTS

Shyamlal was a renowned physician. Once he camped in a bazaar adjacent to the landlord's house.

The landlord summoned the physician oftentimes and complained of a variety of diseases.

"I wonder why there is a sudden spurt of ailments in my body!" the landlord once remarked. The physician kept quiet.

After a few days the physician left for his village. While taking leave of the landlord, he said, "Call me whenever the need arises!"

Six months passed. The physician, on a visit to the bazaar, met the landlord.

"How is it that you never called me?" he asked.

"It has not been necessary," replied the landlord.

"Do you now understand why you seemed to suffer from a spurt of ailments? Because I was available at hand, you could not check the temptation of taking as much advantage of me as possible!" explained the physician.



The Boy who

It was a chilly twilight. Along the lonely road the wind howled as young Hans marched homeward from his school.

He had been late in learning his lesson for the day. The only other boy of the village who studied in his school and gave him company to and fro home had left earlier.

"There is strong wind in the sea; that is why the sea roars so loud," said Hans to himself. And he had taken just another step when, along with the sound of a very loud roar, what reached him was a sprinkle of water.

He stopped. Between the sea and the country stood a wall. Such walls, called dykes, protected his country - Holland - from the sea. If a dyke broke, a large part of the land went under water; crop and houses were destroyed and men and women killed.

Hans examined the dyke. Indeed, there was a chink in it. With every wave dashing against the dyke on the other side, the chink was getting slightly bigger. "It always begins with a chink. Then it grows into a hole. That is followed by the dyke cracking and collapsing and the strong wind pushing the sea into the land," Hans murmured to himself.

He looked around. Not a soul was to be seen. No stone was at hand with which to seal the chink. He shouted. No response came.

The chink had enlarged into a hole. Hans sat down, his palm firmly sealing the hole. The wind grew fiercer and colder and all became dark. But Hans continued to sit there, hungry and shivering.

Hours later his father came in search of him. When he



INTERNATIONAL

hecked a Deluge

discovered Hans and realised what the boy was doing, he ran into the village and warned the villagers. They rushed to the spot and began repairing the dyke.

"But for your action, we would have perished tonight," said one and all. Hans smiled humbly. His example remains an inspiration for all - young or old.



FEAR OF THE CHILD '79

PAYING WITHOUT KNOWING

Vikram borrowed an amount of ten rupees from Anant in order to buy a goat from the market. But the goat died untimely. Vikram felt no urge to pay back his debt to Anant. Whenever Anant came to realise his due, Vikram's wife told him that Vikram was not at home.

Ravi, who was Vikram's neighbour, took Vikram to task and said, "I'd disclose your lie to Anant!" Vikram bribed him with a rupee. Ravi repeated his threat several times and received a rupee each time.

One day Vikram and Anant came face to face on the road. "I'm sorry, but I'll return your money soon," said Vikram.

"Forget it. Ravi has paid it to me already, realising it from you in instalments!" said Anant.





A Folktale from France

THE PRINCESS AND THE WITCH

The king and the queen and their daughter were pacing impatiently on their terrace. They were expecting a very important guest, the prince of the neighbouring kingdom.

The princess, of course, was the one to feel most excited about the visitor. Much had she heard about his virtues, that he was as charming as he was brave. And she looked forward to marrying him.

Let us tell you in confidence that although the princess had some sweet name, people called her Troutina! It was because she bore on her body such patches as are to be found on a trout fish.

And, be sure, she was as cunning as the movement of a

fish in water. Moreover, she was cruel and quarrelsome.

Yes, she was cruel and quarrelsome particularly with Flora. You must be wondering who this Flora was. She was a girl as soft and sweet as a flower. She was the king's elder daughter, born of his first wife who was no more.

The prince that was coming had heard much praise of the princess. Needless to say, that was about Flora, not Troutina.

The prince duly arrived and the king and the queen hastened to receive him warmly. The very next thing they did was to introduce Troutina to him. Troutina pretended to feel shy while the prince cast hurried glances at her. He was a bit

surprised, for, the princess ought to look different if the reports he had received about her were true.

A week passed. One day, on his return after a stroll in the garden, the prince saw a girl sweeping his room. The girl who wore soiled clothes and wore no ornaments at all was ready to leave the room as soon as she saw him. But, "Please wait," said the prince and he gazed at her intently.

"It seems I have seen you. No, I haven't. But you fit the description of a girl I had heard about," said the prince and he sighed.

Curious, the girl asked, "Who

is that girl?"

"The daughter of my host, the king."

"Well, I am his daughter, surely!" mumbled out Flora.

The prince was overwhelmed with bewilderment and joy. Then, with a few questions put to Flora, he grasped the entire situation.

That very night, at their dinner, the queen proposed Trou-tina's marriage with the prince.

"I am willing to marry Flora," announced the prince.

"That would do, my boy..." exclaimed the king happily. But he was rudely interrupted by the queen. "Never!" she screamed, "You must marry



my daughter."

"I shall marry none but Flora," said the prince calmly.

The queen left the dinner in a huff. At once she set out for the royal game reserve, at a corner of which lived a witch. The queen was very fond of her and she was of the queen.

In the morning the naughty witch met the prince. "Either you marry the younger princess or face the consequence!" she hollered.

"Don't threaten me!" shouted the prince, waving his arm. His arm touched the witch's white hair. At that very moment she muttered a spell. The prince was changed into a

golden dove. He fluttered for a moment and then flew away.

Flora was thrown into a dungeon at the top of the castle. Seated there she wept alone for the whole of the day. But as the sun went down and its golden rays sprayed on her window, she saw a golden dove seated on the sill.

Slowly the dove flew in and sat on her shoulder and whispered to her who he really was.

Flora was sad at the prince's plight, but was happy too. He gave her company every night. She cared nothing for her imprisonment.

The queen heard that Flora wept no more. One night she





peeped into her dungeon and heard her talking to the dove. She stormed into the dungeon and tried to take hold of the dove. But the dove flew away instantly.

"I shall ask the king to set his soldiers to capture all the doves!" she announced and hurried to the king's bedroom. But, lo, the king had suddenly died. His ministers stood surrounding his bed. They informed the queen that the king's last instruction was to crown Princess Flora the monarch of the land.

The queen was shocked. She was afraid, Flora, once on the

throne, would punish her and Troutina and the witch. She and her daughter fled the castle. They met the witch and then all the three escaped to some unknown place.

The ministers looked for Flora and found her in the dungeon. They sought for the wicked queen, but in vain. However, with due ceremony, Flora ascended the throne.

But she was not happy. She must find out the golden dove. She asked her ministers to take care of the kingdom and, disguised as a peasant woman, went out in quest of the dove.

Days passed and she was never tired of asking the people, "Have you seen a golden dove?" Nobody had!

One evening, by the side of a river, she met an old woman who had patches on her body resembling those of Troutina. When asked, she said, "Indeed, I know where the dove is. In fact, he is no more a dove. The witch has changed him into the prince that he really was. They want him to marry Troutina so that she can become the queen of his land!"

"What am I to do?" asked Flora, on the verge of weeping.

"Don't weep. Have these

three eggs. Burst one at a time when you need some special help!" said the old woman, handing out the eggs. "Your step-sister is one of those witches who live as trouts," informed the old woman further. "I too am one like her," she said with a twinkle in her eyes, and added, "I wish, she becomes a fish again instead of a queen."

Flora burst the first egg on the river-bank. Before her appeared a small chariot drawn by swans. She went in and was flown to the balcony of a palace that stood on a rock amidst waters.

"You are a fairy, are you?" asked Troutina, coming out to meet the stranger.

"No, I am a human being," said Flora.

Troutina, coming closer, be-

gan to recognise Flora. She looked furious. But before she could harm her, Flora burst another egg.

Instantly a hundred trouts sprang onto the balcony. They pushed Troutina into the river. She fell headlong into the water and was at once changed into a fish.

Flora entered the palace. There sat the prince in his chair, gloomy and weak. He saw Flora, but thought that he was dreaming. Flora greeted him and told him all that had happened. Then she burst another egg. At once a beautiful boat appeared before the palace. They set sail for Flora's castle.

They saw innumerable trouts swimming around their boat. It was not possible for them to recognise which one of them was Troutina.





A Folktale from Italy

THE GRAND SCULPTOR'S PRICE

The good old duke was dead. His courtiers decided to put up his statue at the centre of the city.

The site was selected. Then the courtiers discussed who should be the sculptor to make the statue.

In the neighbouring dukedom lived the greatest sculptor of the time. He was old, still he worked untiringly. He was popularly called the grand sculptor.

The courtiers met him and asked him if he would agree to build the statue.

"Yours was a noble duke. I should love to make his statue," said the grand sculptor.

The courtiers thanked him.

Their spokesman said, "You are a great man in your sphere. It is better to be sure about the price we have to pay you."

"Very well. I should be satisfied with five hundred coins," replied the grand sculptor.

The courtiers looked at each other. They took leave of the grand sculptor, telling him that they will let him know their decision in a few days.

"I am afraid, he demands a high price," one of the courtiers said. The others agreed.

"Why not we find out a sculptor from our own dukedom?" proposed another courtier. The proposal appealed to all. There were half a dozen

sculptors in their dukedom. All of them were the grand sculptor's students.

The courtiers commissioned one of them to make the statue. The young sculptor was happy. He devoted all his time and completed the work in six months.

"What is the amount you expect for your work?" the courtiers asked him.

"A thousand coins," replied the young sculptor.

"What!" the courtiers shrieked out their surprise. They never expected that the young sculptor would demand double the price his master had demanded.

But the young sculptor insisted that nothing less than a thousand coins would be acceptable to him.

The dispute was at last referred to the grand sculptor.

"There is nothing unjust in my student's demand," said the grand sculptor.

"How do you say so, sir? Didn't you demand only five hundred coins though you are the most skilful of them all?" asked the surprised courtiers.

"Because I am skilful, I would have taken only a month to complete the statue, whereas my student had to devote six months to the work," explained the grand sculptor.



THE PUNDIT'S REVENGE

Madan was a naughty chap. He spent most of his time playing with the village urchins. When there was no playmate available to him, he kept busy harassing the passers-by.

One afternoon an old pundit was passing by his village. Madan took aim at his head and threw a pebble. Madan's aim proved accurate.

The pundit stopped and looked in all directions and soon found Madan who stood laughing.

"Wah, wah! What an aim! Here is your reward," said the pundit handing out a paisa to Madan. He observed while leaving, "I wish the landlord who is expected to go this way soon knew of your skill. No doubt, he would choose you for his son-in-law!"

Madan was inspired. Soon he saw the landlord and his party. At once he hit him with a stone and ran to him for a reward. The landlord's people took hold of him and gave him a thrashing!





THE SAGA OF SHIVA

Parvati came over to Kailash to live with Shiva. Their days passed in peace. Devotees of Shiva such as Nandi and the Ganas were never tired of serving Parvati. The once desolate Kailash became the sweetest place in the universe with the presence of Parvati.

But with the gods the situation was quite different. Tarakasur, the mighty demon whom Brahma's boons had made invincible, continued to harass them. In fact, Tarakasur had driven the gods out of heaven, reducing them to a hapless condition.

The gods met Brahma and murmured out their discontent about his giving rare boons to the demon by the dint of which the latter had turned a tyrant.

"It is true that I granted Tarakasur a number of boons. It will be proper to say that he

obtained them by the virtue of his strenuous *tapasya*. Had I not bestowed the boons on him and thereby satisfied him, he would have continued in his *tapasya*. The longer he would have done so, the greater would have been his power. He would have proved himself even a greater menace. But let us go to Vishnu. He will show us the way out of the present predicament," said Brahma.

They went to Vishnu. He said that Tarakasur can be killed only by a son of Shiva. The gods were then led by him to the abode of Shiva. Assembled before the abode, they set up a symbol of Shiva and chanted his glory. The delighted Shiva came out and was surprised to see the gathering of gods.

"What do you want of me,



an incredibly rapid pace. He took hold of Shiva's bow and, shooting an arrow, dislodged a huge rock off Mount Kouncha. Some demons who resided in the mountain swooped down upon Kumar with their terrific wrath, but the boy killed them in no time.

Soon, at the instance of Shiva, a delegation of gods met Kumar and led him to Kailash. Shiva and Parvati were extremely happy to see the young god. Brahma proposed that he be made the general of the gods.

All rejoiced at the proposal. Brahma himself performed the rites which entitled Kumar to claim the position.

"My son, now that you will be in command of the gods, it will be your duty to protect them from all forces which are hostile to them. Moreover, you should go to the rescue of all innocent people who are harassed by the wicked, to whichever domain they might belong," said Shiva.

By and by Kumar was told about the tyranny of Tarakasur. He became determined to put an end to the demon's mischief.

"Prepare yourselves to follow me. I propose to challenge Tarakasur to a battle," announ-

O gods?" asked Shiva.

"A son from you, O Lord!" was the reply. Shiva, eager to comply with their request, threw his power into a fire. Swaha, the wife of the God of Fire, absorbed the power and gave birth to a child on the bank of the celestial Ganga. Six of the seven wives of the Seven Great Sages saw the child and each one, overwhelmed by motherly affection, desired to breast-feed the child. As they came closer to him, the child grew six faces and let all of them play mothers to him.

The child, Kumar, nurtured by the six mothers, grew up at

ced Kumar.

The news of the young god planning to attack him reached Tarakasur at his capital, Shonitpur. He too got ready to face the new danger to his authority. He worshipped Shiva and prayed to be protected by him.

Kumar, at the head of his army, arrived at the entrance into the demon's city. He camped there and, in the tradition of the just warriors, sent an emissary to the demon.

The emissary, Vishakh by name, met the demon and said, "I come with a message from Kumaraswamy, the son of Shiva whom you worship."

"Welcome. I have no enmity with Kumaraswamy. It is the gods whom I dislike. Come on, present the message to me," said the demon.

"O Tarakasur, you have been the ruler of the three worlds by force. But you have done no good to anybody. On the other hand, you have harassed the gods and sages and tortured such kings and warriors who have tried to uphold their rights. You cannot be allowed to do as you please, any longer. My master, Kumar, the commander of gods, asks you to surrender yourself to him. Fur-



ther, he asks you to take a pledge that you will do no mischief in future. If you don't comply with his counsel, you must get ready to face the consequence of your misdeeds," said the emissary.

"I am no coward!" bellowed the demon. "I challenge your master to a combat!"

Soon began the battle. It grew fiercer by the hour. Even if Kumar employed most powerful weapons against the demon, they failed to vanquish him.

It was Narada who whispered to Kumar the secret of the demon's strength. He had put on a garland with the symbol



of Shiva attached to it. That alone protected him.

Kumar shot an arrow which shattered the symbol to five pieces. The fragments fell scattered on the earth. The places where they fell became sacred.

Once the protection was gone, the demon knew that he was about to die. However, a hea-

venly voice assured him of his salvation.

The demon gave an adamant fight before Kumar's arrow threw him down to his death.

A sense of relief pervaded the three worlds at once. The gods congratulated Kumar with a shower of flowers on him.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



THE VALUE OF CONQUEST

King Kirtiverma decided to go out for a conquest of different lands and he disclosed his plan to his minister.

"My lord, it would be wise to consult a sage whom I know. The conquest would be easy with his guidance," advised the minister.

The king met the sage and asked him how to have a quick and easy victory in the wars he proposed to fight.

"Dear boy, go and conquer your anger. Once you've done that, the other conquest would be quite easy," said the sage.

The king came back to the sage after a month and said, "I've conquered my anger. Now tell me how to have a comfortable conquest of the lands."

"Boy, what do I know of wars and conquests? How can I advise you?" asked the sage with a smile.

"You were playing with me, were you?" blurted out the king, brandishing his sword.

"So, this is how you have conquered your anger!" commented the sage.

The king's face paled.

"My boy, if you failed to conquer just one of your own passions, what is the value of conquering others' lands?" asked the sage.



A STRANGE LION NEAR VARANASI

There was panic in the villages around the ancient city of Varanasi. It began with a farmer visiting his field at night. His field abounded in water-melons. The scarecrow which he had erected at the centre of the field was not effective in scaring away jackals or stray bulls or thieves. No wonder that the farmer paid regular visits to the field at night to save his fruits from animals or human intruders.

Out on his usual round one

night, the farmer could hear the sound of a beast munching his water-melons. It was a moonlit night. He proceeded cautiously, his stick held high, to surprise the beast with a lusty bang. But, lo and behold, what a surprise was in store for himself! The beast which was crouching behind a bush, stood up sighting the farmer. At once the farmer turned back and ran. Never had he run at that great speed. On reaching home, he drank up a potful of



water and then stammered out, "A lion!"

For days together it was the talk of the village. A lion in the fields was a terrible thing, although the farmer derived some satisfaction from the fact that his water-melons attracted the king of beasts!

Two days later the lion was detected in the corn fields on the outskirts of the neighbouring village. Next it was found in an orchard a few miles away. Wherever it was found, it was left there in peace to do what it liked. To confront a lion was no fun. Nobody in his senses would do it!

A merchant with a donkey

who moved from village to village selling wares was the one to speak most enthusiastically about the lion. "It is a fearful creature," he would declare. "Once it dragged away half a dozen men at one swoop!"

A merchant who travelled so much ought to know all about the lion's activities. His listeners were too ready to believe him.

One evening the merchant came to camp in a big village near the city. At midnight somebody spied upon the lion grazing upon the tender crop in the landlord's field.

"Lion or elephant, it must get a thrashing," declared the



landlord and he gathered all the able-bodied villagers. "A lion who lives on vegetables cannot be very strong!" he said while leading the villagers to his field.

The villagers, armed with sticks of different sizes, closed in upon the beast. The beast raised its head and looked at them. Panicky, it then let out a cry.

The villagers stood stunned for a moment. They could somehow believe a lion grazing, but how to believe a lion braying?

They rushed at it and rained blows on the beast which made no attempt at attacking them. It collapsed soon, its cloak fal-

ling apart!

"My, my! It is the merchant's donkey!" a villager observed. Some people went in search of the merchant, but he had slipped away.

The landlord carried away the donkey's cloak - a lion's skin. It did not take them long to understand that the merchant dressed up his donkey with it every night and left it in the fields. The people took it to be a lion and kept off it. It fed well and served the merchant better.

After the crowd dispersed, the merchant came to his dear beast, stealthily. But it was dead by then.



THE AGRA FORT

Although Agra is synonymous with the famous Taj Mahal, there are a number of other historic monuments in the city. On the right bank of the Yamuna stands the Agra Fort. Its construction, begun by Akbar, had continued for four generations. The Moti Masjid in the fort is the largest mosque in the world built with pure marble. A flame lit in the emperor's bathroom will make numerous tiny reflections on the mirror-studded wall.



WAR AND PEACE

It happened in 6th century B.C. The Lydian king, Croesus, attacked Persia, but was defeated. The Persians imprisoned Croesus and brought him to their king Cyrus, who ordered him to be burnt alive on a pyre.

Just when the pyre began going up in flames, Croesus was heard uttering the name of his philosopher-friend, Solon, who had once told him that no one who was alive can be called happy.

Croesus' utterance changed Cyrus's mind. He ordered the flames to be put out. As it was not possible, Croesus himself prayed. Rain came down and he was saved.

Cyrus asked him why he chose to fight with him. Croesus, saying that he was misled by wrong inspiration, made this famous statement, "No one is so senseless as to choose of his own will war rather than peace, since in peace the sons bury their fathers, but in war the fathers bury their sons."





THE SECRET OF CURE

Ram Shastri was a physician who practised a folk system of treatment. He prepared medicines out of herbs available in the nearby forests.

People of the locality had a great faith in his skill. On his part, he worked most sincerely and tried his best to cure his patients. He was not greedy of money; but he earned well.

At different times he had different disciples. After their training was complete, they set themselves up as physicians at different places. Most of them did well. Whenever they had any problem regarding the diagnosis of a disease or the treatment of a patient, they came to their teacher.

He wished his only son,

Govind, to learn the system of treatment from him and continue his tradition. But Govind, much he cared for his father's income though, cared nothing for learning his father's science.

One day Shastri told Govind, "How can you earn a living if you don't learn properly?"

"To be frank, father, I don't have much faith in such folk systems of medicine. I am ready to study Ayurveda with attention if given a chance," he said.

"See, my son, each system has a truth behind it. Each system is built upon certain laws of nature. How much you master a system depends on your sincerity," observed Shastri. He then arranged for Govind to go to the town and



learn Ayurveda.

Govind returned home after four years. Shastri was very happy. He gave a house to Govind to establish a new dispensary. Also he sent his own patients to Govind.

Shastri had a desire to discuss with his son about the philosophy of Ayurveda and compare it with the theories on which the folk system was founded. But Govind hardly cared for talking with his father.

For the first few days Govind attracted crowds of patients. But the crowds began to thin out soon. The painful reali-

sation came to Shastri that Govind had not studied Ayurveda sincerely. On one hand he made wrong diagnoses and gave wrong medicines to his patients, on the other hand he derided his father's system of folk medicines. His comments damaged the faith which the people had in Shastri.

A few months passed. One day Govind told Shastri, "Father, who would appreciate my talent in this area of illiterate folks? Let me go back to the town and set up practice."

"Let it be so," said Shastri. Govind set out for the town. But he fell sick on the way. He was brought back to his village.

"I'll cure myself," Govind declared and took some medicines. But his illness took a turn for the worse. Then Shastri took up his case and gave him medicines. But he too failed to bring about any improvement in his condition.

The people were surprised that Govind, being a physician educated in the town, could not cure himself. People were even more surprised that Shastri too failed to cure him!

Shastri called a physician named Pravir from a distant

village. Pravir was Shastri's student; but this fact was kept hidden from Govind.

Pravir began giving medicines to Govind. In fact, it was Shastri who gave the medicines. But Pravir pretended to know much better than Shastri and Shastri too conducted himself humbly before Pravir.

Govind was cured. People were all praise for Pravir.

Pravir now proposed to go back to his village.

"My boy, continue to be here. You will have a roaring practice," Shastri told him.

"Why should I be here when a physician of your skill is available to the people here?" asked Pravir in surprise.

"My career is sealed here. Didn't you see how I failed to cure my own son?" asked Shastri with a sad smile.

"But, sir, didn't I cure Govind only by your prescription?" asked Pravir.

"Right. But why had those very medicines failed to cure him when given by me? It was because he had no faith in me. Faith is the first secret of cure. Govind suffered long because of his lack of faith in me. And because of his suffering, the people here too have lost their faith in me. Whatever that be, I have not lost faith in myself. I can set up practice anywhere. But let the people of this area be benefited by you," said Shastri.

Soon he left for his father-in-law's village and began practising his system there and proved successful in no time.

Pravir stayed on there following Shastri's advice. He gave Govind a chance to work as his assistant.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



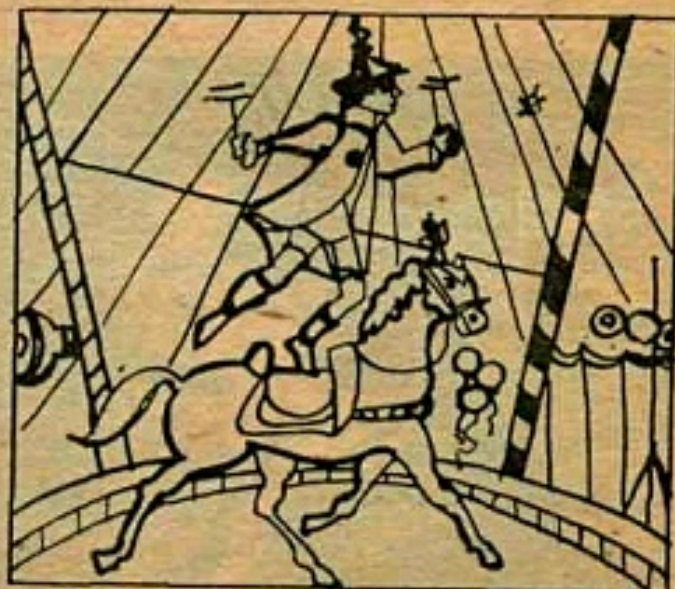
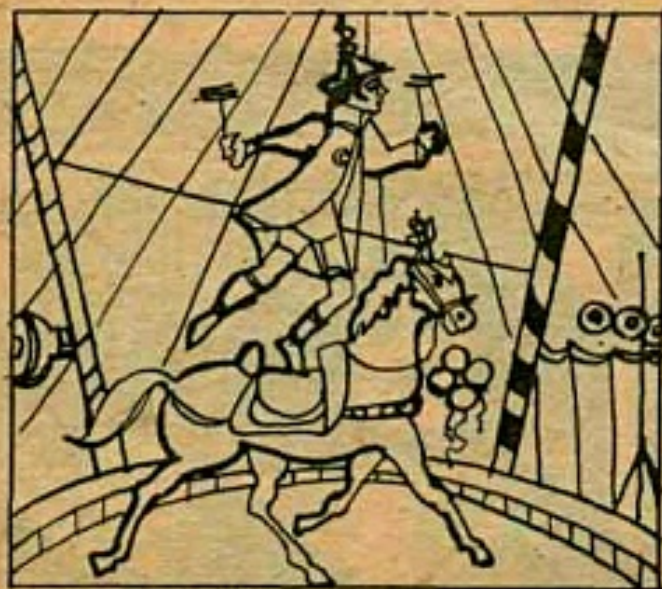
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